URBAN DISTRICT OF RHYMNEY.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

SANITARY INSPECTOR

FOR

THE YEAR 1944.

Powell & Son, Printers, Rhymney

Rhymney
Urban District Council.

Chairman (1944)	Councillor J. J. Williams, J.P.
Vice-Chairman (1944)	Councillor R. J. Griffiths
Clerk and Accountant to the Council	A. J. Rogers, Esq.

MEMBERS.

Upper Ward.
Councillor W. T. Hopkin
Councillor John Jones
Councillor Benjamin Richards
Councillor B. I. Evans, J.P.

Middle Ward.
Councillor O. A. Evans
Councillor Reginald Griffiths (Died 28th Dec., 1944)
Councillor W. R. Morgan
Councillor W. T. Powell

Lower Ward.
Councillor Jenkin Howells
Councillor J. J. Williams
Councillor D. A. Moseley

Abertysswg Ward.
Councillor Gwilym Richards
Councillor Philip Price
Councillor W. J. Greene, J.P.

It is with regret that we have to record the sudden death of Councillor R. J. Griffiths, and we take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efficiency with which he served the Council.

The vacancy was filled by Councillor W. T. Powell.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

Medical Officer of Health (Part time) :
R. V. de Acton Redwood, F.R.C.S. (Edin).

Sanitary Inspector (Whole time) :
G. R. Davies, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.,
Certificated Sanitary Inspector, The Royal Sanitary Institute,
Certificated Inspector of Meat and Other Foods, The Royal Sanitary Institute

To the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Members of the Rhymney Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

We beg to submit the Annual Report on the vital statistics and sanitary conditions of your District for the year 1944. This has been drawn up on the lines indicated in Circular 10/44 (Wales) dated 15th February, 1944, and Circular 49/45 (Wales) dated 19th March, 1945, issued by the Welsh Board of Health.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The natural and social conditions of the area, described more fully in pre-war Reports, altered very little during the year.

Coal Mining is the chief industry, but there are a number of both sexes working in factories situated outside the area. It is believed—and sincerely hoped—that a factory will be erected and be in production before the end of the present (1945) year. Before the War, Rhymney was one of the scheduled Distressed Areas, where unemployment was very rife. The most depressing effect of this unemployment was the exodus of able-bodied young men and women from the district to seek work elsewhere. This inevitably led to a loss in the growing capacity of the population of the district. It is very much hoped that Rhymney—and South Wales and Monmouthshire generally—will be treated more fairly and sympathetically in the future, and if this is so, the health and physical efficiency of the majority of the inhabitants will improve in consequence.

Population at Census, 1921	11,690
" " 1931	10,506
Estimated Resident Population, 1932, as supplied by Registrar-General	10,450
" " " 1933, " " "	10,410
" " " 1934, " " "	10,280
" " " 1935, " " "	10,050
" " " 1936, " " "	9,900
" " " 1937, " " "	9,576
" " " 1938, " " "	9,437
" " " 1939, " " "	9,260
" " " 1940, " " "	9,625
" " " 1941, " " "	9,814
" " " 1942, " " "	9,233
" " " 1943, " " "	9,101
" " " 1944, ... " "	8,881

It will be noted that there were increases during 1940 and 1941 over the population figures given for 1939, and this is accounted for by evacuees coming into the district.

The statistics are based upon the estimated population of 8,881.

Area of the district in Acres	2,647.94
Rateable Value—1st October, 1944	£26,541
31st December, 1944	£26,475
Penny Rate Product 1943—1944	£95 10s. 0d.

HOSTEL. This was not used during the year, but was retained for use as an "Emergency Hostel." It is now closed.

LIVE BIRTHS.

	Total	Males	Females
Legitimate ...	180	84	96
Illegitimate ...	11	5	6

Birth-rate per 1,000 of the Population ... 21.5

STILL BIRTHS.

	Total	Males	Females
Legitimate ...	2	1	1
Illegitimate ...	1	1	0

Rate per 1,000 total live and still births ... 15.46

The Still Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population is 0.33 ; for England and Wales 0.50 ; and for Monmouthshire 0.77.

DEATHS.	Total	Males	Females
	115	59	56

Death Rate per 1,000 of the population ... 12.9

Number of women dying in or in consequence of childbirth—

	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 total live and still births
Puerperal Sepsis	1 ...	5.16
Other Maternal Causes ...	Nil ...	Nil
Total	1	5.16

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age—

Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...	72.2
Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ..	181.8
All Infants per 1,000 live births	78.53

There were 15 deaths under one year (13 legitimate and 2 illegitimate).

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	0
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	0
Deaths from Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age)	2
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	11

Particulars of unusual or excessive mortality during the year—None.

	Death Rate (All Causes)	Live Birth Rate per 1,000 Total Population	Total Deaths under 1 year (Rate per 1,000 Live Births)
England & Wales ...	11.6	17.6	46
Monmouthshire ..	11.29	19.8	52.33
Rhymney ...	12.9	21.5	78.53

The death rate at all ages is a little above that for England and Wales and for Monmouthshire (County), and the rate for deaths under one year of age is 32.53 higher than the rate for England and Wales and 26.2 higher than the rate for the County. It is 1.63 less than the rate for 1943, but there is still considerable room for improvement. The birth rate is higher than that for England and Wales and Monmouthshire (County).

For 1943 the Death Rate (all ages) was 11.09 ; the Birth Rate 21.53 ; and the Infantile Rate 80.16.

HOSPITALS (Infectious Disease). Arrangements are made with other Local Authorities to remove cases of infectious diseases to their Isolation Hospitals when I consider it necessary. For evacuees, arrangements have been made by the County Medical Officer of Health but we have had some difficulty in hiring an ambulance together with a nurse.

TUBERCULOSIS. No provision by District Council. All Tuberculosis Cases are known to the Medical Officers of the King Edward VII. Memorial, who hold a Clinic in the centre of the district once a month, at the Central Surgery, Rhymney.

All appropriate cases are offered and urged to go to the Hospitals and Sanatoria provided by the Memorial.

MATERNITY. No provision by District Council. All expectant mothers are urged to attend the ante-natal clinic of the Monmouthshire County Council at the Urdd Hall, Rhymney. Cases of probable or possible complications are sent to Cardiff for further consultation, and, if necessary, admitted to the Maternity Home connected with Cardiff Infirmary at Glossop Terrace.

Any unexpected emergency, unfit for removal to Cardiff, is dealt with at the Rhymney Hospital.

Some cases at their own request, or for minor complications, are admitted to the Tredegar Maternity Home.

CHILDREN. No provision by the Council. Surgical cases go to the Cottage Hospitals at Rhymney and Abertysswg.

Orthopædic cases, through the County Council, go to their clinics, at places and times arranged by them

A Rheumatic Clinic (post Rheumatic hearts) has been provided by the Monmouthshire County Council.

INCURABLES (Inoperative Malignant Disease). The only provision is the Poor Law Hospital at Tredegar. The need for further provision is constantly being felt for these cases.

UNMARRIED MOTHERS. Illegitimate Children and Homeless Children. The Infirmary at Tredegar and the Children's Homes at Tredegar and Rhymney is the only provision for this district.

OTHER. Poor Law cases needing Hospital Treatment are sent to the Infirmary at Tredegar (four miles).

The Rhymney Cottage Hospital and the Abertysswg Cottage Hospital owned by the Workmen of the district, admit surgical cases, i.e., accidents and surgical diseases of the workmen and their dependents.

Medical and Surgical cases are also sent to the Royal Infirmary, Cardiff, and the Gwent Hospital, Newport.

Convalescent cases amongst colliery workmen go to Talygarn Miners' Welfare Home, also Porthcawl Rest.

A few women go to the Convalescent Home at Southerndown. There is very little provision for convalescent women (one small home for a large area).

There is no provision for convalescence for children.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER SUPPLY. The conditions remain the same as at the end of last year, the supply is ample and of good quality. The Rhymney Urban District Council is a contributory authority to the Rhymney Valley Water Board with representation thereon. Forty-six houses at Princetown and Rhymney Bridge are supplied by the Tredegar Urban District Council.

Source A. Gathering Ground at Blaen Rhymney ; this empties into (1) Old Reservoir, 9,000,000 gallons ; (2) New Reservoir, 46,000,000 gallons ; the property of the Rhymney Valley Water Board.

Source B. From the Taff Fechan Reservoir, the property of the Taff Fechan Supply Board. Capacity, 350,000,000 gallons.

Springs (8 outlying farmhouses and 11 isolated cottages.) On the whole these have been fairly successful throughout the year.

Reports upon Water Samples, etc.

		Number satisfactory	Number unsatisfactory
1.	(a) Bacteriological examination of raw water	1	—
	(b) Bacteriological examination of treated water	12	5
	(c) Chemical Analyses	1	—
2.	(a) Plumbo Solvent Action	Slightly.	
	(b) Details of contamination by lead, precautions taken, and number and results of analyses	None experienced.	

3.	(a) Number of houses supplied from public water mains—	
	(i) Direct to the houses	2274
	(ii) By means of stand-pipes	30
	(b) Approximate population supplied from public water mains—	
	(i) Direct to the houses	8711
	(ii) By means of stand-pipes	110
4.	Action in respect of any form of contamination	None

DRAINAGE, SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL. With the exception of minor improvements and the clearing of blockages, the sewers have, on the whole, worked satisfactorily.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION. With the exception of outlying houses and isolated farmhouses, the whole district is served by the water carriage system. A scheme was prepared during 1939 for the laying of a sewer at Princetown and Rhymney Bridge (60 houses) and for the conversion of the privies and pail closets to water-closets, but owing to the outbreak of War an enquiry arranged by the Ministry had to be abandoned.

COLLECTION OF HOUSE REFUSE, ETC. This service is carried out by direct labour, and under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector. The method of disposal is the same as in most other parts of the County, viz., tipping on waste land.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, SHOPS AND OFFICES. Sanitary conveniences have been provided in all cases where necessary. Attention is also given to Section 10 (1) (b) (temperature).

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS. Eight houses (seven private and one Council) were found to be infested, and the whole premises treated.

The methods adopted are—

(1) Cimex Patent Block Disinfestators and then spraying with insecticide.

(2) Removal of skirting boards, etc., and using a blow-lamp.

The work of disinfestation is carried out by the Local Authority. Insecticides are also given (free) to tenants.

The under-mentioned insecticides and fumigants are used :

Zaldecide, Pyagra, Cimex.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

97 Intimation Letters and 82 Statutory Notices were served.

NUISANCES DETECTED OR REPAIRS REQUIRED.

	Total
(1) Dilapidated, defective and choked W.C. drains	15
(2) Insufficient W.C. or privy accommodation	3
(3) To open and repair slop drains	7
(4) To drain, flush, cleanse or repair urinals	2
(5) To provide or repair cisterns in W.C.s	3
(6) To pave and repair back-yards	7
(7) Throwing of house refuse or removal of foul accumulations ...	2
(8) To cleanse cesspools	0
(9) To cleanse dwelling houses and bedding	1
(10) To provide and repair rainwater troughing, etc.	16
(11) To repair drain vent or soil pipes	0
(12) To limewash pig or chickens cot	2
(13) To prevent overcrowding	0
(14) To prevent pollution of streams or rivers	0
(15) To repair defective house roofs causing dampness	41
(16) To provide sinks in houses	0
(17) To provide or repair coal places	4
(18) To cleanse water courses	2
(19) To repair W.C. walls, roofs, doors and floors	18
(20) To provide new W.C. pans	4
(21) To provide new ovens	4
(22) To repair privies or provide new pails	0
(23) To provide or repair pantries	9
(24) To repair fireplaces	15
(25) To repair or take down dangerous chimney stacks and rebuild ...	5
(26) To replaster walls	21
(27) To rebuild boundary or retaining walls	7

(28) To repair house floors	6
(29) To repair broken ceilings	12
(30) To provide slop drains	1
(31) Defective condition of main walls	14
(32) Defective condition of house doors or windows	54
(33) Other nuisances	20

INFESTATION ORDER AND RATS & MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919. During the year a survey was made to determine the extent of infestation in the district, and notices were served upon occupiers of premises as found necessary. A number of premises (including refuse tips) were treated by the Sanitary Inspector and Assistant Rodent Officer. Treatment of sewers was commenced on the 1st January, 1945.

HOUSING.

For old towns like Rhymney, which contain so large a proportion of low standard and badly planned dwellings, the Government's statement that there is to be a determined attack on bad housing and on the housing shortage, is very heartening.

It has been pointed out by your Health Department for many years that a number of new houses are required, as the majority of existing houses are old and without the necessary conveniences, etc.

All sections of the community are equally deserving of the opportunity to enjoy modern and reasonable facilities, but the majority of houses are even without such necessary facilities as hot water supply, bathrooms and flush cisterns in water-closets. There are only about 386 houses with baths and hot water supply in the area,—and some of these have the bath in the scullery. Most houses are also without a wash-up in the kitchen, and the kitchen is also the living room, bathroom, washroom, and where food is prepared, cooked and eaten, etc.

A large amount of work has again been accomplished in the way of repairing houses. Minor repairs are being carried out from time to time, but with the shortage of labour and materials it is often difficult to have work carried out.

POST-WAR HOUSING NEEDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(1) To replace unfit houses.

(2) To relieve overcrowding.

(3) To provide accommodation for young people who have never had a home of their own, and who have married during the War.

(4) Bungalows for aged people.

Owing to industrial depression and financial difficulties, a Housing Scheme has not been carried out in this area since 1920-21, when 60 houses were built.

The total number of houses owned by the Council is 90.

Prosecutions instituted during the year—Nil.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOODS.

During the year 18 samples of milk were taken for bacteriological examination. These were all found to be free from tubercle bacilli, etc., but in three instances the Pathologist stated that they were not satisfactory "bacteriologically." Where unsatisfactory results were obtained, the persons concerned were requested to appear before the Council.

NATIONAL MILK TESTING AND ADVISORY SCHEME. Since September, 1943, samples have also been collected fortnightly from producer retailers, and results, on the whole, have been satisfactory. During the year 261 samples were submitted for examination.

The two slaughter houses were only used occasionally during the year, in order to kill pigs kept by cottagers, etc. Since the War, livestock are killed at Government slaughter houses.

MEAT CONDEMNED DURING THE YEAR. 128 lbs. Bacon. 12 lbs. Ham. 45 lbs. Veal. 1 Pig's Head and Tongue. 110 lbs. Beef.

NUMBER OF ANIMALS KILLED by Farmers, Cottagers, etc., during the year. Pigs, 128

PUBLIC HEALTH MEAT REGULATIONS, 1924. These Regulations have been carried out in a satisfactory manner on the whole.

SHOPS, STORES. There has been no cause for complaint as to the protection of the meat from contamination and the sanitary condition of the premises. With the exception of two premises, all butcher shops have refrigerators.

FISH FRYING AND CHIP POTATO SHOPS, ETC. Attention was given to all the appliances used in connection with this trade respecting cleanliness, etc.

BAKEHOUSES. Limewashing and general cleanliness receives attention.

OTHER FOOD CONDEMNED. 45 tins Meat. 3 tins Soup. 1 tin Fish. 26 tins Milk. 12 tins Vegetables. 2 tins Fruit. (89 tins). 25 lbs. Sultanas. 120 lbs. Wet Fish.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

1944—67 Cases (Scarlet Fever, 10; Diphtheria, 14; Whooping Cough, 9; Tuberculosis, 23; Erysipelas, 5; Measles, 3; Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 1; Pyrexia, 1; Cerebro Spinal Meningitis, 1).

1943—352 Cases (Scarlet Fever, 6; Diphtheria, 24; Measles, 284; Whooping Cough, 7; Tuberculosis, 20; Pneumonia, 5; Erysipelas, 2; Pyrexia, 4).

1942—49 Cases (Scarlet Fever, 10; Diphtheria, 3; Tuberculosis, 16; Erysipelas, 8; Pyrexia, 4; Whooping Cough, 2; Measles, 6).

1941—93 Cases (Scarlet Fever, 10; Diphtheria, 8; Tuberculosis, 17; Erysipelas, 7; Pyrexia, 2; Ophthalmia Neonatorum, 1; Poliomyelitis, 1; Whooping Cough, 14; Measles, 32).

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH WARD.

Upper Ward	...	...	24 cases.
Middle Ward	..	...	11 cases.
Lower Ward	...	...	15 cases.
Abertysswg Ward	...	...	17 cases.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS) During the Year 1944.

Disease.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths.
Small Pox	Nil	Nil	Nil
Scarlet Fever	10	1	Nil
Diphtheria	14	1	2
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid) ...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	Nil	Nil
Pneumonia	Nil	Nil	6
Other diseases generally notifiable (specify disease) ...			
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis ...	1	Nil	1
Erysipelas	5	Nil	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	Nil	Nil
Poliomyelitis	Nil	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough	9	Nil	Nil
Measles	3	Nil	Nil
Other diseases notifiable locally (specify disease) ...	Nil	Nil	Nil

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

Cases—One			Vision Unimpaired.	Vision Impaired.	Total Blindness	Deaths.
Notified.	Treated.					
	At Home.	In Hospital.				
1	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	Nil

The Sanitary Inspector visits each house and instructs how to carry out isolation there ; in most cases from the number of occupants and the type of house this is difficult or impossible.

Small Pox—No case. Erysipelas—5 cases (2 cases in 1943). No deaths.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Deaths from Tuberculosis of the respiratory system, 14 ; death rate per 1,000 living, 1.57 ; deaths from other forms of Tubercular Diseases, 1 ; death rate per 1,000 living, .11 ; death rate from all forms of Tuberculosis, 1.68. Last year the death rate from Pulmonary Tuberculosis was .43 ; from other Tubercular Diseases, .32 ; and from all forms of Tuberculosis, .76.

New Cases and Mortality during 1944.

The following table shows the age and sex distribution of the notified cases and of the deaths :—

Age Periods.	NEW CASES—23				DEATHS—15			
	Respiratory 18		Non-Respiratory 5		Respiratory 14		Non-Respiratory 1	
	12 M.	6 F.	5 M.	0 F.	7 M.	7 F.	1 M.	0 F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	3	5	—	—	2	4	—	—
35	5	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
45	1	—	—	—	3	1	1	—
55	1	1	—	—	1	1	—	—
65 and upwards	2	—	1	—	1	—	—	—
Totals	12	6	5	0	7	7	1	0

There were 14 deaths from Respiratory Tuberculosis and 1 death from the non-pulmonary type. All the cases were notified.

Patients from the district are admitted to the following Institutions—

(1) Glan Ely Hospital, near Cardiff.
(2) North Wales Sanatorium, Denbigh.
(3) Cefn Mabley Hospital, near Cardiff.
(4) Mardy Hospital, Merthyr Tydfil.

PUBLIC HEALTH (PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS) REGULATIONS, 1925.

No action was necessary under these Regulations, which are framed with the view of preventing persons suffering from Tuberculosis occupying themselves in the milk trade.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936, SECTION 172.

Section 172. This Section which enforces the compulsory removal of a patient suffering from tuberculosis and in an infectious state to Hospital, when there is no proper accommodation at the house, was not made use of.

Tuberculosis is still relatively prevalent in the district compared to other notifiable infectious diseases. It is hoped the new provisions will influence the position. For the allowances scheme, etc., please see Monmouthshire County Council Annual Report.

Diphtheria. The need of immunisation was again widely advertised, and the response was fairly good. Suitable and convenient arrangements were made at Rhymney Hospital and Infant Welfare Clinics for carrying out this work. Fourteen cases were notified, and there were two deaths. Both cases had not been immunised.

Scabies, 1941, Order. This is being carried out and cases were removed to Hospital near Abergavenny.

It is hoped that at a future date it will be possible to open a local Hostel for cases in our own District.

Enteric Fever. No case.

Pneumonia (Influenza and others). No cases notified. The heavy rainfall (and high altitude, 900 feet) during the winter months has some influence on the number of these cases. 6 deaths.

Encephalitis Lethargica. No case notified.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum. One case notified.

Malaria and Dysentry. No cases.

Influenza. 1 death.

Disinfection. In every case of infectious disease the house is visited by the Sanitary Inspector immediately after notification and frequently during the illness until disinfection is carried out.

There is no steam disinfector in the district and no facilities for dealing with verminous persons and their belongings. This matter was discussed with the Tredegar Urban District Council at a meeting held during 1942.

In conclusion we again wish to express our appreciation for the continued and willing support of the Council throughout the year.

We remain, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

R. V. de ACTON REDWOOD, F.R.C.S. (Edin.), etc.,
Medical Officer of Health.

G. R. DAVIES, M.S.I.A., C.R.S.I.,
Sanitary Inspector, etc.

August, 1945.